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SUBJECT: Cameroon Requests Support for ICJ Candidate

¶1. (U) Summary: The Government of Cameroon has requested USG support for its candidate to the International Court of Justice, Professor Maurice Kamto. Kamto is an outstanding legal figure in Cameroon, whose experience in settling the Bakassi dispute and in unifying Anglophone and Francophone criminal and civil procedure codes make him a very strong candidate. End summary.

An Outstanding Jurist

¶2. (U) A renowned jurist, Professor Maurice Kamto is currently Minister Delegate in Cameroon's Ministry of Justice. Prior to becoming a minister in 2004, he served as Dean of the Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences at Yaounde II University, one of Cameroon's state universities. In addition to his normal duties as Minister, he teaches in several Cameroonian state universities and higher institutions of learning, including the International Relations Institute (IRIC) and the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM). Professor Kamto is also Associate Professor in several universities in Europe and Africa, as well as The Hague Academy of International Law, and is frequently called upon to act as a consultant for an array of local and international organizations. Professor Kamto is also a member of the United Nations International Law Commission. He has written over 50 articles and several books on international law, including:

Droit de l'Environnement en Afrique (The Law of Environment in Africa)

L'OUA, Retrospective et Perspectives Africaines " (A Look Back at the OAU,

And African Prospects)

Decheance Politique (Political Decline)

Pouvoir et Droit en Afrique Noire: Essai sur Les Fondements du Constitutionnalisme dans les Etats d'Afrique Noire Francophone (Power and The Law in Black Africa: An Essay on the Foundations of Constitutionalism In French-Speaking Black African States)

L'Urgence de la Pensee : Reflexions sur une Precondition du Developpement en Afrique (Urgency in Thinking : Reflections on a Prerequisite to Development in Africa)

Key Player in Bakassi

¶3. (U) Professor Kamto played a key role in settling the Bakassi dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria. In 1994, he was named co-agent and legal counsel for Cameroon on this case, and his knowledge of international law and contributions proved instrumental in gaining the ICJ's favorable ruling for Cameroon. When Cameroon and Nigeria signed the Greentree Agreement on the implementation of the ICJ ruling of October 10, 2002, Kamto was named Delegation Leader for Cameroon to the Follow-up Committee of the Agreement. On

August 14, 2008, on behalf of the GRC, he signed the final transfer documents of Bakassi to Cameroon.

Further Bio Information

14. (U) Maurice Kamto was born in 1954 and is a native of the West Province of Cameroon. He studied at the following universities and institutions: University of Yaounde; Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationales, Nice, France; Institut d'Administration Publique de Paris; Universite de Nice, France. He holds the following qualifications: PhD in International Law (1983) (First Class, with Distinction); Diploma of the Public Administration Institute (1982); Diploma in Extensive Studies in International Law (1980); Diploma in Extensive Studies in Fundamental Public Law (1980); Certificate in European Communities Studies (1980); Diploma in International Higher Studies (1980); Bachelors Degree in Public Law (1979); "Agrege des Facultes francaises de Droit" (Grade of Full Professor of Law). In 1997, Professor Kamto was called to the Paris Bar. Kamto is fluent in French and speaks excellent English. He enjoys the reputation of a brilliant intellectual with strong ideas on democracy and human rights. Kamto has always had a friendly relationship with the private press. He is a member of the editorial board of "Mutations", a reputable Yaounde-based private daily newspaper. He is married to a career diplomat who is the Director of European Affairs in the Ministry of External Relations. He has five children.

Comment

16. (U) Post believes Professor Kamto is a very strong candidate

YAOUNDE 00000885 002 OF 002

for election to the ICJ. As one of the most qualified international lawyers in Sub-Saharan Africa, he is well known to post and his professionalism, dedication, and experience are impressive. Professor Kamto was singled out as an outstanding lawyer in the Bakassi border dispute, and his election will provide him with the opportunity to contribute to the ICJ's work at the international level. Kamto has also been actively involved in creating new Criminal and Civil Procedure codes which unify the application of the country's Anglophone and Francophone legal systems. His familiarity with both systems would be an asset in the ICJ. In addition, Cameroon has been increasingly helpful on international issues of importance to the USG and support for Kamto would help encourage further cooperation. End comment.

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